

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A valve assembly comprising:
a valve body having a rotary valve member and a valve stem extending from said valve body;
a handle having a proximal end and a distal end, and a longitudinal axis extending between said proximal and distal ends, said proximal end being connected to said valve stem and said handle being operable to rotate said valve member between an open position and a closed position;
the improvement comprising:
said handle distal end defining an opening that is adapted to receive a ratchet handle.
2. The valve assembly according to claim 1, wherein said opening is generally square.
3. The valve assembly according to claim 1, wherein said opening is generally hexagonal.

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4. In combination, an improved valve handle and valve handle extension, said valve handle having a proximal end operable to rotatably drive a valve member and a distal end selectively engageable with said valve handle extension, wherein said valve handle extension is a ratchet handle and said valve handle distal end defines an opening that receives a drive head of

said ratchet handle.

5. A method for creating additional torque to free a frozen valve, wherein said valve includes a valve body receiving a rotary valve member, a valve stem extending from said rotary valve member and said valve body, and a valve handle connected to said valve stem at a proximal end thereof and having a distal end, comprising the steps of:

providing an opening in said distal end of said valve handle, said opening being adapted to receive a drive head of a ratchet handle;

inserting the drive head of the ratchet handle into said valve handle opening;

positioning said ratchet handle in a position to effectively extend a length of said valve handle; and,

applying force to said ratchet handle to force said valve handle in a desired rotational direction.